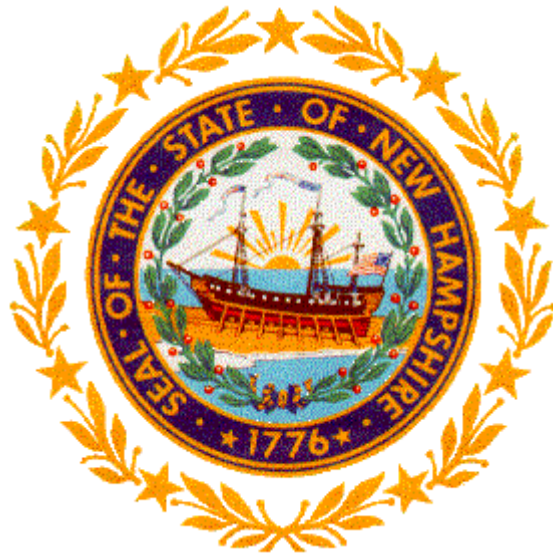


The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services



***HomeCare Works
Success TRACK Program
Pilot Concept***

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GraniteCare Job Corps HomeCare Works Pilot Concept

BACKGROUND:

“Nursing homes are the last level of care. Everybody wants to stay in their homes and everybody’s family wants them to stay in their homes as long as they can.” (Coos County Community Forum on GraniteCare Proposal)

The long-term care of New Hampshire’s needy seniors is primarily provided in nursing homes. Not only is nursing facility care less desirable to many persons, it is more expensive. As a consequence, the Department’s expenditures for nursing facility care make up approximately 85 percent of the total outlay for long-term care for seniors, depending upon the method of calculation. Clear evidence exists from other states that a significant growth in home and community options will result in significant savings. For example, the State of Wisconsin has experienced a savings of almost 25% of the cost of nursing home care by offering community based options to its seniors (State Legislative Report of National Conference of State Legislators, Vol. 24, No. 2 [Personal Assistance Services, January 1999]).

Several factors contribute to the excessive utilization of nursing home care. One significant factor is that the workforce necessary to provide the community based care has not been adequately developed. The GraniteCare Job Corps HomeCare Works Program proposed here is an important step in developing the workforce needed to keep seniors in their homes. Not only will this program help keep seniors in their own homes, it will provide for health care training sanctioned by the New Hampshire Board of Nursing for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and those at risk of becoming TANF recipients. The result will be an expanded quality workforce trained and experienced in providing home care to seniors.

This program is a Win/Win for the citizens of New Hampshire: as a result of quality care provided by trained and experienced health and home care workers, seniors will be able to remain in their homes longer in accordance with their desires and at less expense to the State; individuals on, or at risk of being on TANF assistance will have an opportunity to become educated and trained, and climb the career ladder in the health care field; and taxpayers will benefit from the resultant Medicaid cost efficiency. This program proposal sets forth a conceptual plan for helping TANF recipients expand the ranks of quality home health care workers.

Our work in developing this concept paper has been facilitated by agencies whose work it is to provide home health care to NH’s elderly. We’d like to express our appreciation to Quality Care Partners, Tri-County Community Action Program, and the Androscoggin Valley Partnership (a collaboration of Coos Country Providers and the Androscoggin Valley Economic Recovery Corporation) for not only their interest in this type of initiative but also the time and effort they invested in providing ideas and recommendations on how best to deliver this type of program. Their expertise in serving the elderly combined with the NH Employment Program’s record of success in preparing TANF families for employment greatly enhances the viability of this proposal.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- To expand the workforce that will enable the preference of seniors to remain in independent living situations;
- To achieve Medicaid program cost efficiencies for taxpayers; and
- To provide career opportunities to TANF recipients and low-income individuals at risk of qualifying for TANF in the health care field through a comprehensive community-based, collaborative training initiative complete with support services and incentives to ensure both short- and long-term success.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Administration: This program will be developed and delivered as a partnership between health care consortium groups to be organized within each delivery area, and the NH Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS). Consortium groups will serve in an advisory capacity as well as an employment link to the health care community. The health care consortium group will consist of state and community organizations serving TANF recipients and/or the elderly and disabled, Workforce Investment Act¹ (WIA) Workforce Counselors, direct care staffing agencies, and local training providers, including local technical colleges. The program will be administered and coordinated through the DHHS NH Employment Program (NHEP) state and local office staff. Within DHHS, the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services will partner with the Division of Family Assistance on the further development and implementation of this program.

Training Approach: Training will encompass both the technical and soft skills² necessary to succeed as a home health care worker. NHEP employment counselors will recommend that eligible candidates who have not attended soft skills training through LEAP (Lifeskills for Employment, Achievement & Purpose) do so prior to enrollment in technical training. The LEAP program covers such soft skills as balancing work and family, time management, parenting, and basic financial skills. Candidates will then be referred to existing job openings with local home care providers who will provide new-hire orientation training and six months of on-the-job training. Once trainees have completed the six-month on-the-job training program for home care, they may continue on in a training activity towards an LNA credential while continuing to work in accordance with TANF program work requirements. Additional educational assistance and support services will be available to program participants for up to one year following closure of TANF to encourage continued education and career paths as Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses or other allied health care positions.

Competencies: All individuals trained through HomeCare Works for unlicensed positions in home health care, such as housecleaning, must successfully attain competencies through training as outlined by their employer. Those individuals pursuing a position as an LNA, LPN, or RN will receive training from within the existing infrastructure of trainers recognized by the NH Board of Nursing, must pass the competency exam sanctioned by the New Hampshire Board of Nursing, and must apply for and receive a New Hampshire license.³

¹ Workforce Investment Act provides Department of Labor funding for low income and dislocated adults.

² Softskills will include workplace expectations, communication and interpersonal skills, time and stress management, etc.

³ The LNA license is required in order for the health aide to provide personal care as well as some clinical care services.

NH DHHS

Division of Family Assistance
HomeCare Works Concept Paper

Employment Linkages: A strong working relationship with local direct care staffing agencies is anticipated as part of their role on the local health care consortium. In addition to participating in the training design, these employers also provide sites for placement in full and/or part-time employment. On-the-job training (OJT) reimbursements, funded with federal dollars, will be made available to employers as an incentive and to ensure comprehensive training takes place on the job.

Funding: Funding for the program components is currently covered through the NHEP's existing job readiness contracts as well as employment and training services routinely offered to participants. Additional cost areas have been noted herein wherever unique support services deemed critical to the success of this program have been identified.

Pilot Regions: Initial pilots of the HomeCare Works program have begun in the Manchester and Berlin, NH, district office catchment areas. Overall performance in the pilot communities will dictate future expansion into additional communities.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS:

Planning & Development: Program planning and development was coordinated by the Division of Family Assistance and the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services, and included members of the local health care consortium, the NH Board of Nursing, and other pertinent community stakeholders. This involved soliciting input on candidate profiles, screening requirements, assessments, training components and support services to ensure the needs of both the trainees and the home care service consumers will be met. Outcomes and benchmarks for success are also a part of the on-going planning and development phase.

Kick-Off Meeting: Once the program design and timeline had been determined, a Kick-Off meeting with the NHEP Employment Counselors, NHEP partners, WIA Employment Counselors, and local community partners was held to introduce the program and the timeline.

Job Development: NHEP Team members will develop relationships with local home care employers, including those within the local consortium, for the purpose of identifying and referring candidates to home care job openings as they become available.

Marketing/Recruitment: NHEP Team members and partners will identify potential candidates from existing case files and introduce the opportunity at individual meetings and weekly NHEP orientation sessions. A marketing piece will also be developed and distributed to all potential candidates inviting them to an orientation session.

Orientation Session: NHEP Employment Counselors will use their discretion in conducting orientation sessions on an individual basis or in a group format, based on the number of available jobs and prospective candidates. Candidates may be required to attend a multi-media orientation session that will provide a comprehensive overview of the industry, the application process, the training, the support services, incentives, career ladder potential and program requirements. NHEP members, volunteers from the health care consortium, and training providers will assist in designing and delivering this reality-based overview.

Application: Interested candidates will be given an application to complete in order to be considered. This is a detailed application form that will help determine suitability for training/employment and

detect any hidden barriers or obstacles such as lack of reliable child care and/or transportation that might exist which could hinder successful completion of the training and subsequent employment. Staff and partners, including the consortium members, have had input in the development of this application.

Assessments/Screenings: The NHEP team in cooperation with partner agencies will begin the assessments and screening process. This would include interest and aptitude tests and any other screening or assessments as identified by consortium members.

Interviews: Those candidates who have successfully completed the application and assessment process, will then be referred to one or more job interviews for current openings with local home care employers.

Participant Supports:

- LEAP: A 3-week life skills education component provided by UNH Cooperative Extension through contract with NHEP that prepares the individual for balancing work and family, including budgeting, parenting skills, managing stress and preparing healthy meals.
- Childcare Resource & Referral: All candidates will work with the DHHS-contracted Childcare Resource and Referral Specialist to secure reliable childcare, including back-up arrangements.
- Transportation: LEAP will assist students in providing evidence of routine and back-up transportation.

Job Skills Training:

Candidates who have been hired by a home care provider will enter an on-the-job training component.

On-the-Job Training: On-the-job training (OJT) contracts with employers will be offered as incentives to employers for hiring graduates and to ensure continued training while on the job. The OJT contract provides the employer with a monthly training reimbursement, paid for with federal funds, up to 50% of the worker's starting wage for an agreed-upon period. On-the-job training contracts will be written for employment of 24 hours per week or more.

Training Curriculum: Training will be according to existing curricula established for home health care workers by the hiring agency. The length of the new hire orientation training will depend on the training program provided by the employer.

Employer Training Reimbursement: Employers will receive three \$200 training reimbursements for new-hire orientation and mentoring support as well as a six-month on-the-job training reimbursement. The first \$200 reimbursement will be upon completion of the new-hire orientation training; subsequent reimbursements will be at the completion of three and five months of on-the-job training.

Trainee Stipend: Upon successful completion of the employer's new-hire orientation training on or about two weeks following date of hire, trainees will receive a stipend of \$50, provided through federal funds. Trainees who continue to successfully participate in the on-the-job training program will also receive two additional stipends of \$200 each, one at the completion of three months on the job and the remaining stipend at the completion of five months on the job. These stipends will serve to help defray

expenses that might exceed support services provided by NHEP (i.e., gas money, tolls, clothing, etc.), as well as serve as a job-retention incentive.

Retention/Career Advancement Services: When graduates of NHEP's employment retention and advancement program end TANF cash assistance due to their employment, they will continue to receive financial assistance for such things as transportation and childcare, if needed, according to existing eligibility criteria. They will also receive personal employment coaching services to assist with problem solving, career planning, and workplace issues, as well as helping with access to resources to support and encourage continued education in the healthcare field. This will be fully supported by federal funds.

Recruitment and Retention Incentives (funded with federal dollars):

- A total of \$450 in training stipends paid to trainees while participating in the on-the-job training component.
- Linkages to training resources and financial aid to establish healthcare-related career ladders and continued education.
- Referrals to "Wheels to Work" and/or Bonnie CLAC for assistance in obtaining reliable automobiles, if necessary.
- Peer support groups to help with parenting issues and transitioning back into the workplace, including emergency childcare services to ensure worker attendance, possibly through a registry of home care workers available for on-call child care services.